

'Backgrounders' Abused, Says UPI

United Press International said yesterday that its newsmen are under instructions to make it clear to officials that the news agency believes in the greatest possible identification of the sources of news.

"We think the backgrounder has sometimes been abused," said Julius Frandsen, UPI Washington vice president and general manager. But he added that the agency had to "cover all the news, however it may develop."

Background briefings—at which high government officials talk to newsmen on the understanding that they will not be identified—came under critical scrutiny during the past week.

Washington Post reporters have been told to insist that

material offered at briefings be on the record and fully attributable. The New York Times has told its newsmen to "be a lot more selective" about attending backgrounders.

UPI's Frandsen said in a statement:

"UPI believes in the greatest possible identification of the sources of news. Our reporters are under instructions to make this clear to the officials with whom they deal. We think the backgrounder has sometimes been abused. But we also recognize an obligation to our subscribers in this country and abroad to cover all the news, however it may develop. Each problem involving attribution has to be considered in light of these sometimes conflicting goals."